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THE
CHRISTIAN CALLING;
OR,
STATE OF SALVATION,
INTO WHICH WE ARE
BROUGHT BY THE GOSPEL.

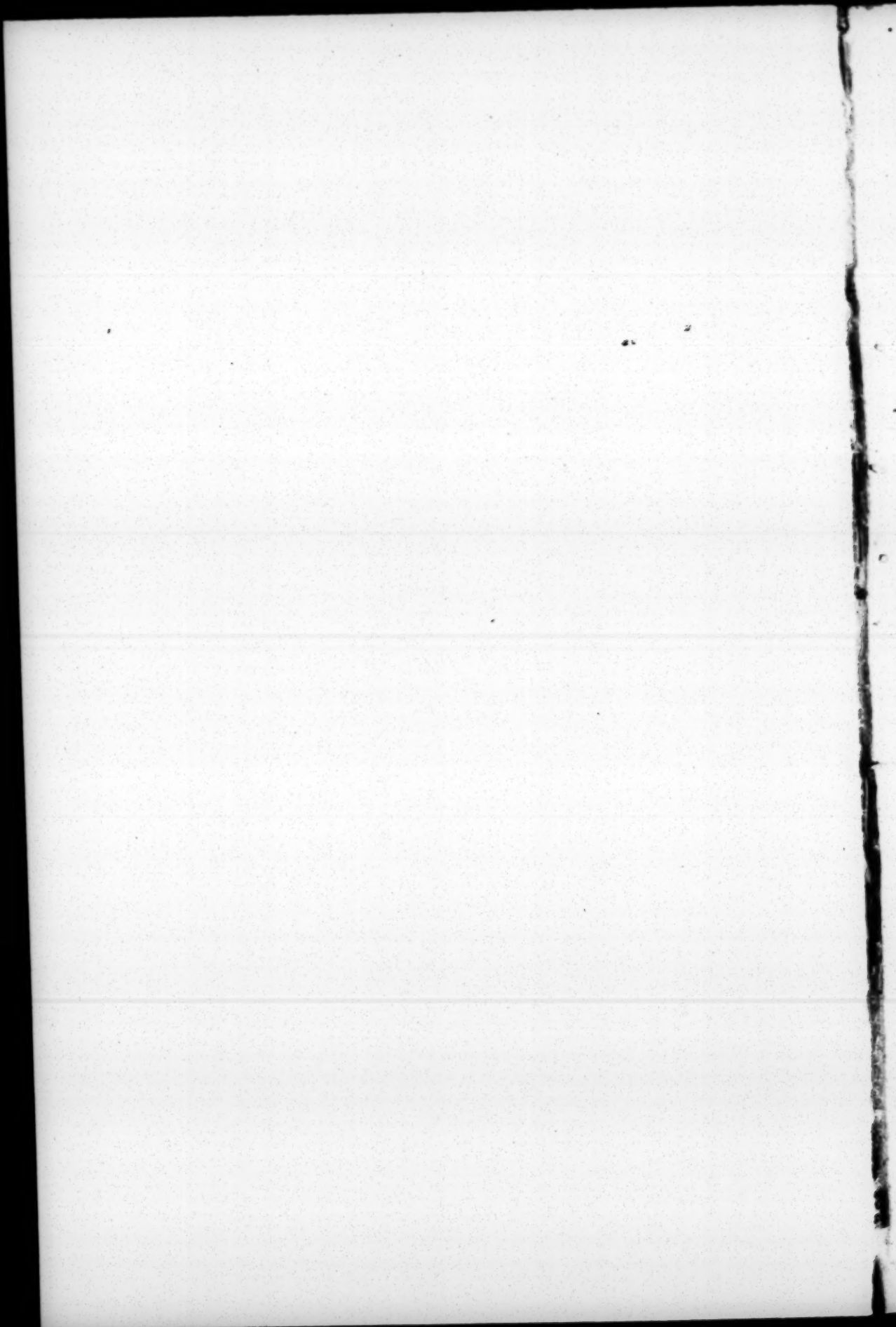
A
SERMON from Rom. i. 6.

By the Rev. THOMAS ADAM, Rector of Wintringham.

Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his Kingdom
and Glory. 1 THESS. ii. 12.

YORK:
PRINTED BY WILSON, SPENCE, AND MAWMAN;
FOR T. WILSON AND R. SPENCE,
HIGH-OUSEGATE.
Anno 1788.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



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Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ. ROM. i. 6.

AS Christians, we are called to the remission of sins, to a new state of holiness, and the hope of everlasting life by Jesus Christ; and we have the promise of the blessed Spirit to begin, carry on, and complete the work of our salvation. This is the mercy of God to a world of perishing creatures, dead in trespasses and sins, and under a sentence of condemnation. And to explain the whole nature and manner of our redemption by Christ, St. Paul was directed by the Spirit of God to write this epistle to the Romans; which, to every serious, child-like reader of it, will appear to have all the instruction in it we want, fully sufficient to settle our judgment in points of the greatest importance, and a most invaluable treasure of saving knowledge. Let me recommend to your attentive consideration the 17th verse of this chapter, which is the ground work of the epistle, and most divinely illustrated throughout the whole of it, where he says, "therein"—in and by the gospel of Christ—"is the righteousness of God"—what he will account to us for such, and we must all have to appear in before him—"revealed from faith to faith"—faith growing from one degree to another; "as it is written, the just shall live by faith." To the same purpose he speaks, Tit. 3, 4, &c. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." To which

I might add the testimony of all the other Apostles, but shall mention only one more from St. Peter, 2 Epist. i. 2. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." Any one of these texts is worth a world to a soul fainting under the burden of sin, and able to make us all wise unto salvation. They comprise the whole wisdom and will of God for our recovery in so short a compass, that we may easily retain them in our memories, and make use of them as a light to guide us into the understanding of all scripture. When we receive these sayings into our hearts, we are among the happy men and women spoken of in the text, and shall live and die in the comfort and hope of the gospel. And would to God I could address myself to every one that hears me, in these words of the Apostle, "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ."

Blessed God, do thou soften the hard heart which resists thee in unbelief; give us the hearing ear, and the understanding heart; and be now present, in the power of thy grace, while I am speaking of our high calling in Jesus Christ!—The Lord enable you, 1. To understand it;—2. To rest your souls upon it;—and, 3. To live worthy of it.

1. Let me exhort and call upon you to *understand* the Christian calling. Know then, that it is the free grace and mercy of God to mankind, when their desert from him was wrath and punishment. We are all sinners, as well by nature, as actual transgression, in thought, word, and deed, every day of our lives; and "the wages of sin," the due reward of all sin, and the just sentence of God upon every single sin we commit, "is death." Of which the first sin of the first man is a remarkable instance; and speaks aloud to us to beware how we entertain any such opinion of the harmlessness of sin, as that God may well overlook it, when we see it was so severely punished in the first parents of mankind the moment it entered into the world, and brought a curse upon them and all their posterity. If you do not attend duly to this part of the Bible, so as to take a measure from hence of the great evil and guilt of all sin, how hateful it is to God, how dreadful in its consequences, you will understand nothing else that follows in it. The mercy of it will be hidden from you, and the grace of redemption slighted, unless you are well grounded in the doctrine of sin, its accursed nature, and your own desert of eternal damnation as sinners. Settle it, therefore, in your minds, that if God is always the same, and his justice unchangeable and everlasting, we are all under a sentence of condemnation for the sin of our nature, the sins of our lives, the sins of our hearts; and this will open the way to your understanding.

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and belief of the necessity and great mercy of deliverance from it.

For God, who pitieth us as a father pitieth his own children, hath not left us to perish. He hath published his new covenant of grace to all nations; he hath fulfilled the promise made to Adam, of bruising the serpent's head, by the seed of the woman that was born at Bethlehem; he was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; thro' him is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins. And let us observe also, that this grace comes to us in a way of justice as well as mercy; according to that saying of St. Paul, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 26. The meaning of which is, that if justice had not first been satisfied, we could never have been justified, or accepted to the favour of our offended God. And as there was no other way or means of doing it, as no other ransom could be found in heaven or earth for the forfeited lives of our souls, God gave his only begotten Son, and Christ willingly offered himself, to bear our sins in his own body on the cross, and redeem us from the curse of them, by being made a curse for us: So that we can now say joyfully, and with full assurance, on the authority of God's word, "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 14. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

My brethren, do you understand this? The Spirit's first office in us, is to show us to ourselves, to convince us of sin, and of the damnable nature of a natural state; has he done this? Do you see your sin, and condemnation under it, according to the light of scripture? Do you know and observe how justice and mercy are reconciled in the work of our redemption, how unable we are to deliver ourselves, and how much was to be done before we could be entitled to the grace of forgiveness?—Let me advise you,

2. To rest your souls upon it; in the belief of God's word, that if he is true, there shall be a performance of all that has been told us: That as sure as Christ said to one, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" to another, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace;" as sure as he said to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," and gave up the ghost with these words, "It is finished"—so surely was the finishing hand put to the work of man's redemption, the forgiveness of sins purchased, and a new and living way opened for all sinners to the throne of grace. On this foundation, that God hath laid on Christ the iniquity of us all, and that he is "the Lord our righteousness," our peace is established; and on this we may safely rest it against all our sins, all our doubts, fears, and misgivings; and can possibly build it on no other.

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Some, when they have begun to be in pain for themselves, and to look out carefully for salvation, are cast down with the sense of their sins, as well they may; but then they are also apt to be over-much daunted with the sight of their unworthiness; and this thought naturally arises in their hearts, that before they can have hope toward God, or a right to trust in his mercy through Christ, they must be better qualified for it; that is, they would first make themselves clean, and then come to Christ for washing in his blood. No, my friends, your own cleansing is only washing the Ethiopian's skin; you must let that alone for ever, as to any thought of being accepted of God in that way. This is nothing but unbelief, and pride of heart; this is darkening the glory of all scripture, and an utter depreciating of the grace of God in showing mercy; this is not coming to Christ, but keeping yourselves from him; and I tell you again, in this way you will never know peace, you will neither wipe out the guilt, nor get the better of any one sin. If ever you come to Christ, you must come all foul and spotted as you are, without one rag to cover your nakedness; and with no other sense but this upon your minds, that you are entirely undone in yourselves, and that if you go about to establish your own righteousness as the ground of your hope, you will never see the salvation of God.

I do not say this to lessen your sense of sin, or to keep off shame and sorrow for it, but to show you how great it is, upon this very consideration. You are most assuredly hidden from yourselves, and in the darkness of unbelief; have no spiritual conviction of your own sin, or true sense of the guilt of any sin, if you think it can be purged with any thing but the blood of Christ, or blotted out of God's book in any other way than that of free pardon, and undeserved mercy. I say, therefore, it is, and must be, by "the word which God sent by Jesus Christ, preaching peace." It is only and altogether his bowels of pity, and fatherly compassion, to a condemned world; and no repentance, no purposes or endeavours, no kind of worthiness of our own can be the price of it. Alas! we quite mistake the matter; we have nothing to offer by way of price. Strictly speaking, our duties are sin, our prayers are sin, our best works are sin, and our transgressions open and secret are numberless: What then must give ease to our consciences, and enable us to lift up our heads before God, when we know that all sin is deadly, and and that if we have nothing but ourselves, and the works of our own hands to trust in, sin will surely be found upon us in our very best estate.

To you, then, I speak first, who are awakened to see your want of a Saviour, prize your interest in him, and are seeking after his blessings, let him save you wholly, and be all in all to you. You can add nothing of your own to his spotless obedience,

perfect grace, and precious blood; but by such a presumptuous thought diminish from his glory and all-sufficiency, and run the hazard of losing your portion in him. I am sure you lose your best comfort in this world, and will never go on your way rejoicing, or have an assured confidence in the promises of scripture, till you embrace them as *promises*, and the gift of God to you a sinner. For sins you will have enough to cloud your hopes, and daunt your heart, as long as you are in this mortal body. Turn then the eye of your soul another way, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" and think with yourself that the best faith to live with, is that which, when you have done all you can, you must die with; that faith, I mean, which St. Paul preached to the awakened jailor, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That faith which our Lord himself preached, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Let me here, for your further assurance in this matter, repeat the 11th article of our Church, entitled, *Of the Justification of Man*; which, as I have subscribed with my hand, I assent to with all my heart, and bless God for it: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." My friends, take this comfort into your hearts, as you well may, on the warrant of God's word, and assure yourselves that you have a faith of God's giving, and the Spirit's working, when you believe that we are blessed and happy in Christ, not by having no sins, or none which need trouble us, but by not having them imputed to us, "even as Abraham," a better person than any of us, "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

I am well aware that we must by no means speak peace to ourselves in a fruitless, dead faith; which will come under consideration when I have added a few words, for the sake of the yet unbelieving, or careless open sinner. What! is the Saviour ready to meet you with open arms? is God willing to receive you to mercy, and bestow heaven upon you? You, who have wandered so far from him, and so long resisted him in unbelief, and hardness of heart? You, who have rebelled boldly against his authority, and affronted him in the face of the world, by your open breach of his commandments, and and graceless profane living, "May you be among the called of Jesus Christ?" Yes; you are called now, by the preaching of his word, and by his grace working with it, may be called

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3. Remind all those who *know* the mercy of God in Christ, and have the grace given them to embrace it, and *rest their souls upon it*, of THE NECESSITY of *walking worthy OF IT*.

It is the usual manner of St. Paul, after he has stated and explained the doctrine of grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, to recommend a suitable practice, and enforce it from the motive of God's love to us in our redemption. Hear what he says, Rom. xii. 1. after having established the great point he had to prove, of righteousness and salvation, by faith in a Redeemer; "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service." So in his epistle to the Galatians, v. 13. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty"—the happy liberty of believers, in being freed from the law, as a covenant of works—"only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh"—do not so horribly abuse gospel grace, as to make it a handle for continuing in sin—"but by love serve one another." And thus he writes in all his epistles, advising us to adorn the doctrine of Christ, and acquainting us from God, that "if we live after the flesh we shall die," no mercy can save us. But most powerful is the exhortation of our blessed Lord himself; "If ye

love me, keep my commandments." It is all the return he expects from us for his vast expence of love to us; and we must be utterly dead to all sense of it; and, whatever we pretend, can possibly have no faith in him, or desire of his salvation, if we refuse him this testimony of our love and gratitude, which he so earnestly and affectionately calls for. The mercy of God, in our deliverance from death and hell, is the gospel-ground of all holy obedience, and our great advantage for it; it touches every string in the heart of man, and wins over our whole souls to him, when it is truly apprehended and thoroughly believed. When we consider as we ought, how deliverance comes to us, by the incarnation and death of the Son of God, the love there was in it, the dreadful and eternal misery from which it saves us; we must needs judge ourselves the basest of all creatures, and want no other proof of our astonishing corruption, if we can affront and slight our best benefactor, our God and Saviour, by living and acting in opposition to his will. We ourselves expect returns of love for the kindnesses we do to others, and think it hard to have it denied us, and more especially requited with ill-will: And why then should not God look for ours, if he had no right to it on any other account, on the score of his superabundant loving kindness to us; or why should things work a different way, where he is concerned, from what they do on the like occasions among ourselves, and his love, so little deserved, so wonderfully manifested on our behalf, meet with nothing but disobedience, and stubborn perverseness from us? It does not, it cannot, with true believers. Many of them have smarted inwardly for sin; and all of them have their eyes opened to see the curse and plague of it; can find refuge from it no where but in Christ, and have therefore come to him for healing in his blood. And when they hear him saying, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say," the reproof cuts them to the heart; and they know with infallible certainty, that they cannot belong to him, if they do not resolve to forsake every sin.

Consider this, you who are baptized into Christ; and say you believe in him, and hope for salvation from him, and yet live on from year to year in known sin. What! Can drunkards, profane swearers, Sabbath-breakers, fornicators, stealers, evil-speakers, and those who make a mock at sin, be the followers of the Lamb, the redeemed of the Lord, "the called of Jesus Christ?" No such thing. Do not deceive yourselves in so plain a case: All Scripture is against you: The most odious despicable creature in the sight of God is a baptized wicked man, and his sentence will be heavier than that of the worst heathen's. The blood of Christ, which saves others,

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effectually. "For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. and "he is able to save to the uttermost ALL that come unto God by him." Come then to him, though you have lain ever so long in your sins, a sad spectacle in your blood beyond other men; "Come to the fountain" opened in him—For what? For the saints, and those who have no need of washing? No; but, mark it well, "for sin and uncleanness." Hear him saying, "Him that cometh to me," let him be who, or what he will, "I will in no wise cast out." Now is your time; this very day, the moment you hear of such rich mercy from the Lord, is the season to receive and welcome it, as you would a pardon, if you was under sentence of death. You have all the assurance your soul can desire, from the whole word of God, and especially from the death of Christ, that, whenever you turn to him, with a sorrowful sense of your sins, and a will to forsake them, his eyes are upon you for good; that he who has been waiting with so much patience and long-suffering for this hour of your return to him, will not reject you; and that the same Spirit which wrought conviction in you, will carry on the work of your conversion, from repentance to faith, from faith to holiness. These three things make a Christian; and the last of them must by no means be wanting in his character. I must now, therefore,

3. Remind all those who *know* the mercy of God in Christ, and have the grace given them to embrace it, and *rest their souls upon it*, of THE NECESSITY of *walking worthy OF IT*.

It is the usual manner of St. Paul, after he has stated and explained the doctrine of grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, to recommend a suitable practice, and enforce it from the motive of God's love to us in our redemption. Hear what he says, Rom. xii. 1. after having established the great point he had to prove, of righteousness and salvation, by faith in a Redeemer; "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service." So in his epistle to the Galatians, v. 13. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty"—the happy liberty of believers, in being freed from the law, as a covenant of works—"only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" do not so horribly abuse gospel grace, as to make it a handle for continuing in sin—"but by love serve one another." And thus he writes in all his epistles, advising us to adorn the doctrine of Christ, and acquainting us from God, that "if we live after the flesh we shall die," no mercy can save us. But most powerful is the exhortation of our blessed Lord himself; "If ye

love me, keep my commandments." It is all the return he expects from us for his vast expence of love to us; and we must be utterly dead to all sense of it; and, whatever we pretend, can possibly have no faith in him, or desire of his salvation, if we refuse him this testimony of our love and gratitude, which he so earnestly and affectionately calls for. The mercy of God, in our deliverance from death and hell, is the gospel-ground of all holy obedience, and our great advantage for it; it touches every string in the heart of man, and wins over our whole souls to him, when it is truly apprehended and thoroughly believed. When we consider as we ought, how deliverance comes to us, by the incarnation and death of the Son of God, the love there was in it, the dreadful and eternal misery from which it saves us; we must needs judge ourselves the basest of all creatures, and want no other proof of our astonishing corruption, if we can affront and slight our best benefactor, our God and Saviour, by living and acting in opposition to his will. We ourselves expect returns of love for the kindnesses we do to others, and think it hard to have it denied us, and more especially requited with ill-will: And why then should not God look for ours, if he had no right to it on any other account, on the score of his superabundant loving kindness to us; or why should things work a different way, where he is concerned, from what they do on the like occasions among ourselves, and his love, so little deserved, so wonderfully manifested on our behalf, meet with nothing but disobedience, and stubborn perverseness from us? It does not, it cannot, with true believers. Many of them have smarted inwardly for sin; and all of them have their eyes opened to see the curse and plague of it; can find refuge from it no where but in Christ, and have therefore come to him for healing in his blood. And when they hear him saying, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say," the reproof cuts them to the heart; and they know with infallible certainty, that they cannot belong to him, if they do not resolve to forsake every sin.

Consider this, you who are baptized into Christ; and say you believe in him, and hope for salvation from him, and yet live on from year to year in known sin. What! Can drunkards, profane swearers, Sabbath-breakers, fornicators, stealers, evil-speakers, and those who make a mock at sin, be the followers of the Lamb, the redeemed of the Lord, "the called of Jesus Christ?" No such thing. Do not deceive yourselves in so plain a case: All Scripture is against you: The most odious despicable creature in the sight of God is a baptized wicked man, and his sentence will be heavier than that of the worst heathen's. The blood of Christ, which saves others,

proclaims aloud his guilt, speaks nothing but horror and a curse to him who tramples it under foot, and is the seal of his condemnation.

In conclusion, let me speak to you in the name of God, and beseech you, by all your hopes, to consider who are *the called of Jesus Christ*, and whether you are indeed of that happy number. It is a blessed thing to be called out of a state of condemnation, and made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; but the unbeliever, worlding, or wicked liver, is not the man. It is a glorious high privilege to be possessed of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to have our hearts settled in the love of God, through the fellowship of the Holy Ghost; but this blessedness does not belong to the lazy and the thoughtless, who call themselves Christians, but in the main are as ignorant as heathens, know nothing of Christ but by hearsay, do not read the Scriptures to know more of him, and have very little sense of their want of him, or concern about their interest in him. My friends, do not thus lose the prize of your high calling. Your danger lies in trusting to your Christian name and outward profession, and thinking all safe for heaven, because you come sometimes, or generally, to church on Sundays, and now and then to the sacrament. Christ may not be the pearl of great price with you, nor his salvation the great hope and wish of your hearts. In particular, do you ever sit down in the evening of a Sabbath, or at any other time, to enquire into the soundness of your condition, or ask yourselves any questions concerning your knowledge, faith, and practice? Do you ever examine when the work of your conversion began, how it has been carried on, and what foundation you are now upon for life? Do you muse much, and with great seriousness, on the corruption of your natures, the great evil of sin and your vileness in it, the value of your immortal souls, and how precious they are in the sight of God? And especially, do you seek to win Christ, to be found in him, and obtain redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, the great point on which your salvation more peculiarly turns. If not, it proves but too plainly, that you are in the darkness of a natural state, and not yet "the called of Jesus Christ." I never knew any persons awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of their danger and misery in sin, who did not take more pains to get an interest in Christ, and show more concern about it than this comes to. Salvation must of all necessity be the weighty thing upon our minds, drive us to prayer, and be the frequent employment of our thoughts and meditations; and none have reason to hope well of their condition, who do not make it their first care, and the great work

of their lives. I pray God you may so ponder upon these words, "the called of Jesus Christ," as to come to him without delay, understand the great mercy of redemption by him, rest your souls upon him for righteousness and salvation, and live worthy of him in the practice of every thing he requires of you, under a thankful sense of his love; and that you may consider, on the other hand, what it is to live and die *uncalled*, and enter upon eternity a lost man. O Lord, grant unto us all, that we may press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus, give all diligence to make it sure, and so run that we may obtain; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

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